

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

of the

Suffolk County Legislature

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Health & Human Services Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, New York, on September 14, 2006.

Members Present:

Legislator Eli Mystal • Chairman

Legislator Steve Stern • Vice•Chair

Legislator Jack Eddington

Legislator Edward Romaine

Members Not Present:

Legislator John Kennedy

Also in Attendance:

George Nolan • Counsel to the Legislature

Ian Barry • Assistant Counsel to the Legislature

Renee Ortiz • Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature

John Ortiz • Senior Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office

Michael Cavanagh • Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay

Paul Perillie • Aide to Majority Caucus

Linda Bay • Aide to Minority Caucus

Bill Faulk • Aide to Legislator Romaine

Deborah Harris • Aide to Legislator Stern

Ben Zwirn • Assistant County Executive

Brendan Chamberlain • County Executive Assistant

Dennis Brown • County Attorney's Office

Ed Hernandez • Deputy Commissioner/Department of Social Services

Linda O'Donohoe • Assistant to the Commissioner/Dept of Social Services

Dr. David Graham • Chief Deputy Commissioner/Dept of Health Services

George Proios • Chief Environmental Analyst/Suffolk County Planning

Sandy Sullivan • Legislative Director/AME

John Foley • Former Legislator/District #7

Dr. Joseph Harder • Patchogue•Shirley Liaison Committee

Deb Friedman • Executive Director/SAJES

Jack Jerdan • SAJES/Suffolk Association for Jewish Educational Services

Lisa Jamison • Director of Family Services/Family Service League

Trish Weiner • Program Coordinator/AFY After•Care Program

Ronnie Sonnenberg • Stress Support Systems, Inc.

Susan Eckert • United Cerebral Palsy of Suffolk

Zabby • Governmental Access Television

All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Lucia Braaten • Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 2:08 PM*)

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much for indulging us in our little break.

All rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Stern.

Salutation

Thank you very much. The order as to how we're going to do things are going to be a little bit different, so bear with us. Usually we start with presentation, then we do public portion, then we do the agenda; I am changing the order slightly because of the late hour and because of distinguished guests that we have in our mist.

The first thing I would like to do is to call former Legislator Mr. John Foley to the table and Dr. Harder to the table. You could sit at the table so the two of you will be together.

MR. FOLEY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your kindness in permitting us to appear and to make statements concerning certain topics which are close to the heart of so many of us, including yourself and your committee.

I have here for you that can be distributed to your committee copies of the Annual Report 2005, 2006 will not be ready until 2007, but this is the South Brookhaven Family •• note, accent the word family •• Health Center Administrator's Annual Report and it shows a picture on the front page of the Shellabarger Center in Shirley as well as the Patchogue one at Center West. I'll hand these up so they can be distributed. These pages contain what I would call many important nuggets of information, particularly as to the performance of the health centers which can best be summarized by saying that the health centers, east and west, are constantly attempting to improve themselves and to relate to the needs of that community.

I also would like to personally parenthetically compliment the full Legislature for its override, unanimous override of the County Executive's veto of the Community College Budget which happened only recently. And you'll be hearing directly from them as to an expression of their gratitude on that particular •• on that particular illustrative issue.

Having said that •• and I'll be as brief as possible, Dr. Harder would like to say certain things. But it's most important for us to realize that it is a moral responsibility, not merely a political one, to provide for care for the poor in this County and that's why on one previous occasion we appeared to speak to the callous and cynical attempt to privatize the Skilled Nursing Facility at Yaphank.

Having said that, we're now faced with a problem known as Public Health Nurses. And these people have illicited certain responses, one of which, for example, a person in the Social Services Department indicated why they're the front•line fighters for us as far as important information is concerned. Another person I know in the Police Department immediately said, without any prompting whatsoever, said to me that these people don't even have sufficient vehicles or cars of their own to do their job.

So what is needed, in my opinion, and respectfully I say this to your committee and to the full Legislature, that it is necessary to bite the bullet on this question so that there will be sufficient cars, so that there will be a career ladder for Public Health Nurses, to attract them to the public service so that they will be in sufficient numbers and sufficiently equipped to meet the needs, for example, on the east end which is a matter of much concern to the people and to the Legislators from that particular area. So that there are so many dimensions to this. But let us start with the Public Health Nurses because they are those front•line fighters and we need them, we need a program. It might cost some money, but the question is not cutting, slashing, the question is how can we improve and how can we perform a service?

Now, let me say this. In my opinion, in my opinion, there is an attempt here, a pattern, and as we learned a long while ago, like a {Schtalt}, for the County Executive's Office to disembowel the

Public Health Services in this County, not merely to amend them.

And having said that, I would at least temporarily retire from the arena and let Dr. Harder say whatever he wants to say. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much. Dr. Harder?

DR. HARDER:

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I'm Dr. Harder. I was former Director of the Marilyn Shellabarger Health Center for approximately 13 years, Medical Director, and before that I was in private practice for nearly 22 years.

I must say that just in quick reference to what Legislator •• former Legislator Foley said, it's quite true that the Public Health Nurses are vital in the delivery of care. I remember when I was a student in University of Tennessee learning my medicine, that I don't think I would have really learned obstetrics except that there was a Public Health Nurse that took us out and we delivered in the field, and I've had back in Memphis many children that were amusingly named after me because the mothers had run out of names.

LEG. FOLEY:

I never knew that about you.

DR. HARDER:

Well, it just came to my mind because I remember these Public Health Nurses served a very vital function then and I'm sure they still do now. Because less than ever do physicians make house calls, as you all know, unlike when I first started practice and the Public Health Nurses fill a void that otherwise would not be filled in terms of knowing the home circumstances and the background of what the patient is situated in and how that affects his disease and how that affects his treatment and cure or amelioration without someone there directly knowing the home environment of many patients, much vital information is lost. So I'll support Legislator Foley in that, former Legislator Foley in that regard. I consider him and Marilyn Shellabarger my mentors in terms of advocacy.

I just wanted to say one thing. In terms of the budget, we will probably be facing a less than adequate increase. My information I've not yet reviewed or had a chance to review the proposed budget, but short of a 4% increase, it will result in cuts of services, if it's only 2% it may, in effect, be like a 2% decrease in services provided by the health center. I've been informed by the people who know that there have to be perhaps an evening, a week and a weekend day that would have to be cut out if the budget is that limited to only 2% or possibly to a zero increase.

Positions, of course, need filling all over in the health centers, not just positions to be approved but ones that have been approved to be released, and this is particularly a problem on the east end, and I wanted to address it because I was at the meeting last night where I heard Legislator Romaine address the needs. And I know myself that the conditions at the Southampton and East Hampton Centers are really, with tremendous overburdening with patients, inadequate staff and probably at times crowding to a degree that's not really even safe. Lesser problems have come up and only one will I address because I want to be brief.

Security seems to be an ongoing concern at several health centers, and particularly at the Marilyn Shellabarger Center. The fact that lights are out in the parking field and that we've had three episodes of concrete blocks being thrown through windows and rocks being thrown through windows and concern among the staff about safety there, it's surprising that nothing has been done

to fix this up yet, but I just wanted to speak of that.

There are many other aspects in the different health centers that need attention, but I don't want to go through all of those, just to make that comment on the budget, the need for adequate increase to keep operating. Because costs go up all the time and a zero or 2% increase will not meet the need and will result in cuts of services.

Now, just one final comment, because I consider it so important. I've been hearing talk about not only privatization of the John J. Foley Nursing Center or of the Public Health Nurses, but we've been hearing talk about privatization of the health centers as a way of cutting taxes. And I want to say that this will be, I think, a devastating thing to do because of the fact that there's been a successful partnership established here over many decades of a County role, a hospital role and a community council role in running these centers to the point that they become a model for most of the country to follow and to look at as a way of providing health services that sometimes cannot be provided that well by a centrally located general hospital such as we saw in Nassau County.

So that I feel that our system has been working for a long time and we're getting more revenues actually in the health centers to balance the cost than we ever did. And I don't know why at this time the question of privatization has come up, but I wanted to register my firm opposition to it as defeating the fundamental objectives of the health centers in what they were doing. And with that, I'll close my remarks.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much, Dr. Harder. I'll open the floor for questions, anybody. Legislator Romaine?

LEG. ROMAINE:

Legislator Foley, it's a pleasure to see you again.

MR. FOLEY:

Nice to see you.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Having sat next to you ••

MR. FOLEY:

It's nice to see everyone.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Someone once said that people don't grow old as they age, only when they desert their ideals; you'll never grow old. You're here fighting for the same thing you were fighting for when you sat next to me 20 years ago and I learned a great deal from you. Thank you so much and it's always a pleasure to see you, John.

MR. FOLEY:

Thank you. Thank you, Ed.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much.

MR. FOLEY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

DR. HARDER:

Thank you again.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

As we used to refer to you, the dean.

MR. FOLEY:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you, Dean. Thank you, Dr. Harder.

MR. FOLEY:

God bless everyone.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

We are going •• well, I have three cards which will take us about ten minutes to go through, so we'll go through those three cards, then we're going to go to the agenda, then we're going to go to the presentation. The agenda will not take long, it will only take about 15 minutes.

So the first card that I have is from Deb Friedman. Step up to the podium and •• you guys are from Stages? And I usually •• no, step up to the podium, you've got three minutes on the public portion. Yeah, over there, yes.

LEG. NOWICK:

They're on the agenda, under presentations.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Oh, the presentations. Oh, you've got a presentation.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

Presentation, right.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Oh, then you don't have to speak now, because you get more time in the presentation than you do now.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

That's what I thought.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Okay. I have Captain Bill Smith. Captain?

MR. SMITH:

Thank you. I'm here to speak about this bill for the Tick Eradication Program on Shelter Island. And despite the fact that the local paper would lead you to believe otherwise, there are a considerable amount of people on Shelter Island who are opposed to this program and they're opposed to it because of their concerns about the long-term effects of Permethrin, and particularly its effects on the marine environment.

So I'm here today to appeal to you to hopefully not move forward on this bill, which I see is flawed anyway •• you know, I'll get to that in a second •• before a complete environmental impact statement is done. I mean, to push this bill through with all the risks that are involved to not only environment but the people of Shelter Island, I feel would be incredibly irresponsible. And it says here that in the seventh paragraph it says, just briefly, "In that the resolution concerns purchasing of furnishings, equipment and supplies, other than land, radioactive materials, pesticides, herbicides or other hazardous materials." In fact, these four posters, the active ingredient in them is a 10% solution of Permethrin. So you're talking about •• the bill is written for furnishings and

equipment when in reality you're using this money, which you're not supposed to use out of this budget, to purchase huge amounts of pesticides.

So I just •• you know, I hope that you'll act responsibly for the benefit of not only a lot of people on Shelter Island, but also the environment and maybe take a step back, look at this, have some people; like Ward Stone from the DEC who is the State Wildlife Pathologist come and address you so that he can also talk to you about the risks associated with this Permethrin.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much.

MR. SMITH:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Any questions? Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Bill, how are you?

MR. SMITH:

I'm great. How are you?

LEG. ROMAINE:

Good. A couple of things. First of all, thank you for calling my office regarding this. We are going to be tabling this bill, I'm going to make the motion to table it. We are going to •• it will go through a SEQRA process and it will have, if required, an Environmental Impact Statement done; I don't make that and it's not incorporated in the bill, CEQ will make that type of decision.

MR. SMITH:

That's good to know.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Number one. Number two, I'm looking to amend the bill because the original information about having as many as 80 stations was too many, so we will not need to spend all of the money that we need to spend.

And number three, we have every intention of •• and we've communicated with the DEC and the US Fish & Wildlife will be communicating with them as well. And probably what I would do is before I ask this Legislature to vote on this, I probably would have a Town Hall meeting in Shelter Island to get impact, because I know there's an issue here. Some people have shown studies and indicated that Permethrin is not harmful, that it dissolves quickly, that it would have the ability to treat the deer.

MR. SMITH:

Right.

LEG. ROMAINE:

And that the tick is carried by the deer. Now, I'm one of those who also believes that ticks are carried by chipmunks and mice and rabbits.

MR. SMITH:

Exactly, right.

LEG. ROMAINE:

But you know what? This problem on Shelter Island is so massive of tick infestation that I think people have looked to this as a total solution. I understand it's a partial solution and a very strong good step, because if you can get this off the deer, but then you've got to deal with other mammals of smaller varieties a tick might infest. So I'm aware. I am going to table this, will not ask my colleagues to move forward until there's a consensus, not only •• well, we think we have a consensus from DEC and we'll wait for the US Fish & Wildlife, but a consensus of the residents. I would not ask my colleagues to support anything that the majority of the residents of Shelter Island would feel would be wrong for that Island. But so many of the people that I've met in Shelter Island •• and as you know, I'm out there all the time •• have come up to me with this and suggested this. I mean, the entire Town Board appeared here, I mean, their entire Deer & Tick Committee, several medical doctors all came and testified on this.

And I understand your concern because you're a fisherman.

In fact, if Ben Zwirn is here, I've recommended ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Legislator Romaine, is there a question in our future?

LEG. ROMAINE:

I recommended Bill for the Fishing Committee that the County Executive has set up. And you're concerned that this might get into the waters and might do a lobster die•off.

MR. SMITH:

There's no question that that would happen.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

There's the question.

MR. SMITH:

There's no question that it would happen. And there is absolutely no question that this stuff in minute quantities, and we're talking about parts per billion, is extremely lethal to marine life.

Can I just comment on a couple of your points there? I think the bill •• in fact, I know the bill is asking for 80 of these and you mentioned that 80 •• we may not be able to use 80 of them on Shelter Island because the way the laws were written as far as how far these have to be from houses and structures and things.

LEG. ROMAINE:

That's why we're revising it.

MR. SMITH:

Well, there's all •• right, but if we can't use •• and I've heard this from the manufacturer; there has to be a certain amount of these used or else the program would be ineffective anyway. So just as an assumption, if you put 20 of them out there, if you spent the money to put 20 of them out there, it may •• the program may fail because there wouldn't be enough.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I think they're looking at 40, the last time we looked at this, and we're doing a mapping of the Island to determine where those sites would be. But as I said, there will be a full Environmental Impact Statement done for this program before it's implemented.

MR. SMITH:

Oh, that's great.

LEG. ROMAINE:

And what we're doing is we would probably be purchasing the equipment and giving to the Town of Shelter Island to run. The County won't run the program, they'll work with the town in getting a report on this.

And I can promise my colleagues one thing, because I just would say •• and no offense to you, but my experience is that there was strong support, not unanimous but strong support on the Island for this.

MR. SMITH:

Uh•huh.

LEG. ROMAINE:

And I will have a public hearing on this issue in Shelter Island at Town Hall before I ask my colleagues to vote on this as well. And we are revising this because it will be less units that we will be employing.

MR. SMITH:

Okay. Well, that's assuming that it does happen. But just one thing, if I may say in closing, and then I'll stop. You know, there is a tick problem on Shelter Island and I think a lot of people on Shelter Island are concerned about it. But at some point we have to get past being arrogant enough as human beings to think that we're going to control nature. We tried to do that in many cases in recent years with disastrous results, one of them being the lobsters in the Long Island Sound, and that was Permethrin.

So I hope you'll take a close look at this. I hope you'll have somebody like Dr. Ward Stone come from the DEC and talk about this objectively and, you know, I'd be glad to give you any input I can, too.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I will ask the DEC Director, Peter Scully, to make sure that Dr. Ward Stone is involved. I just would tell you this, sir. One of the other concerns is that if we •• we're not using the 4•Poster System now on the Island, but what people do, and you know they do it, is they spray their lawns with Permethrin, and actually there's more Permethrin going in to the environment with the spraying of all the lawns because of the tick invasion as opposed to the Permethrin that would be available through the 4•Poster System.

MR. SMITH:

Well, that may or may not be true ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Captain Smith, I don't want to get into a long debate on the bill.

MR. SMITH:

Okay, I just want •• that's being addressed.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Last statement. Thank you.

MR. SMITH:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Next speaker is Ronnie Sonnenberg.

MS. SONNENBERG:

Good afternoon, Chairman Mystal and distinguished members of the Health & Human Services Committee. My name is Ronnie Sonnenberg and I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today about the alarming divorce rate and how the deteriorating institution of marriage is impacting your constituents and Suffolk County.

Numerous studies have been conducted that provide different estimates, but generally speaking, researchers currently estimate that there is a 40 to 50% divorce rate of first marriages and probably 60% plus of second marriages. The early years of marriage are the riskiest with one in five marriages ending in the first five years and one in three marriages ending in ten years. I am a psychotherapist and a marriage education lecturer that has managed a private practice for over 25 years counseling hundreds of individuals and couples. I felt personally compelled to come before you today because I am deeply concerned about the effect that this significant divorce rate has had on so many of the estimated 1.5 million people that reside in this county, not to mention the financial strain that this poses on the County's Operating Budget that you will be discussing in just a few weeks.

You may be asking yourselves, is this •• is this a problem that the Suffolk County Legislature

should be addressing? The answer is yes, because marital erosion during the past several years has had considerable negative effects on society and government. This is a social dilemma that we are all paying the price for through the unhealthy dysfunctional relationships and therefore high property taxes that pay for related services and supports that are needed due to this social dilemma. Studies have shown that the breakdown of the institution of marriages, the predominant cause of child poverty and the principal cause of welfare dependence in our society. Research has also shown that compared to similar children from intact families, children raised in single-parent homes are more likely to become involved in crime, to have emotional and behavior problems, to fail in school, to abuse drugs and to end up on welfare as adults.

When you look at the adult population over all, married adults are happier, are more productive on the job, earn more, manage their finances more effectively, have better physical and mental health and live longer than their unmarried counterparts. In an effort to adhere to the three minute time constraint, I've provided two handouts that I'd like to hand out. In an effort like I said, I've provided two handouts. One is a bulleted list entitled "Why Marriage Matters"; that is an excerpt from a report that was produced by a politically diverse and interdisciplinary group of leading family scholars. The other is a letter that I hope you will take the time to read because it should enhance the conversation on this issue that hopefully we have now begun.

I know that Suffolk County Legislature prides itself in being an innovative Legislature body. That is why I'm confident that the members of this committee will rise to meet the challenge of increasing the number of individuals in healthy marriages, thereby decreasing the negative financial strain on the County's budget. At this point, I sincerely hope that you are now asking yourselves how to do we go about doing this? One possible solution to fund expenditures in this area is to tap into the existing State and Federal funding streams.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Please wrap up.

MS. SONNENBERG:

Excuse me?

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

You're about five minutes into your thing. Go ahead.

MS. SONNENBERG:

Oh, I'm sorry. And the funding streams I'm talking about, some of them have just been put into effect last year and specifically for marriage education. My letter mentions two potential revenue sources that can be analyzed for this purpose.

Beyond the funding, what is lacking is an incentive for your constituents to get involved in marriage strengthening programs.

Due to our dynamic and changing society, couples today are faced with confronting circumstances that previous generations did not have to deal with which have redefined the role of the male and female in today's society. Education is essential to the success of a couple's ability to manage these changing times. My letter speaks to some of the potential proactive solutions that would motivate individuals to take an active role in one of the most important relationships in their lives.

Briefly, couples could receive a discount on their marriage license fee if they took a course or the County could consider an innovative solution such as a marriage education property tax credit incentive program, using the County's current volunteer fire fighters and volunteer ambulance workers real property tax ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Please wrap up.

MS. SONNENBERG:

Okay. I'm basically done, I'm sorry. There are few of the many potential solutions that you have the power to analyze, hopefully look at, consider this proposition. I will close right now, I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Okay, somebody wants to ask you a question so you have a little bit more time. Legislator Kennedy? I mean Eddington, I'm sorry.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

We all look alike, I know.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

I know, I know, you all look alike to me.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Thank you. You know, my background is in relationship therapy and I've done a lot of marriage counseling. You're talking about license, you have to get a license to get married, you've got to get a license to do most things, but getting married seems to be the only one that you don't have to get qualified to do.

MS. SONNENBERG:

Thank you.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

And are you suggesting that maybe •• like I've always thought that before you can get married you should have to have five sessions at least by a certified therapist. Are you talking about like adding something like a requirement before you get married?

MS. SONNENBERG:

That would be a wonderful idea. Originally, before I came up with this proposal, what I was thinking, that in order for a spouse to be covered under insurance policies, but that's for the insurance company to have to deal with that. But you're right, marriage is the only thing that we can obtain a license for without showing any education in it whatsoever. You have to go for a course for a driver's license and not only do you have to go for a course for that but you have to maintain certain things. For any other degree, I, having my license as a social worker, had to go through numerous years of education to do that, whereas marriage ••

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Well, what I didn't hear •• what I heard was a financial incentive to stay together, not a training program. I'm not sure I would be able to support people staying together for money.

MS. SONNENBERG:

Okay, it's not for money. The idea is that to get an incentive to get them involved into a marriage training program.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Gotcha, gotcha. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you. Legislator Stern?

LEG. STERN:

Never mind.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much, Ronnie. I have a bunch of questions I could ask you, but it's late.

LEG. STERN:

Exactly.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much.

MS. SONNENBERG:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

That's all the cards that we have. We are changing •• like I said before, we're changing the program just slightly. We're going to go right to the agenda and then after the agenda we'll have the presentations that are on the agenda.

Tabled Resolutions

1740•06 • Amending Resolution No. 386•2006, to establish a new fee policy for the Suffolk County Tobacco Cessation Program (Alden). I make a motion to table.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Second by Mr. Eddington. All in ••

LEG. ROMAINE:

Question.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Question by ••

LEG. ROMAINE:

Very quickly. If Dr. Graham could come forward, my question about a related topic to this resolution is something I'd like to put to Dr. Graham.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Legislator Romaine, if it's related, could we •• we're just tabling this.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Oh, okay.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Because once you get Dr. Graham on the floor, you know what's going to happen.

LEG. ROMAINE:

No, no, no, no, it's a very basic simple question, but I will wait.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you. Call the vote; all in favor? Against? Abstentions? ***Motion is tabled (VOTE: 4•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).***

Tabled Resolution 1952•06 • Adopting Local Law No. 2006, a Local Law to require proper supervision at hotel and motel swimming pools (Cooper). Motion to table.

LEG. STERN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Second by Legislator stern. All in favor? Abstention? No?

Motion is tabled (VOTE: 4•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).

1971•06 • Adopting Local Law No. 2006, a Local Law strengthening smoking prohibitions at Suffolk County Facilities (Presiding Officer Lindsay). Motion to adopt •• to approve.

LEG. STERN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Abstention? No?

Motion carries. *Approved (VOTE: 4•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).*

Introductory Resolutions

2066•06 • Amending the 2006 Adopted Operating Budget to accept and appropriate 100% additional State aid from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to Concepts for Narcotics Prevention for Medically Supervised Outpatient Services (County Executive). That should be defeated just because the title is too long.

MR. BARRY:

That's the wrong one.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

That's the wrong one?

MS. ORTIZ:

Wait, are you reading the right one?

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

We're on 2052, okay. Okay, I'm sorry, that was 2066.

2052•06 • Amending the 2006 Capital Budget & Program and appropriating funds in connection with purchase of 4•Poster machines for Tick eradication Pilot Program on Shelter Island (Romaine). Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I'll make a motion to table this.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Second the motion. All in favor? Abstention? No? ***Motion is tabled (VOTE: 4•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).***

2066•06, I already read it, I'm not going to read it again (***Amending the 2006 Adopted Operating Budget to accept and appropriate 100% additional State aid from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to Concepts for Narcotics Prevention for Medically Supervised Outpatient Services (County Executive).***

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Can we put it on the Consent Calendar?

MR. BARRY:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

What, the next one? 2066 is to be put on the Consent Calendar.

I make the motion to approve.

LEG. STERN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Abstention? No?

Motion is approved and on the Consent Calendar (VOTE: 4•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).

2067•06 • Accepting and appropriating 80.1% State grant funds from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services for the New York State Legislative Member Item Grant for support of the Peconic Bay Estuary Program.

LEG. STERN:

Motion to approve.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Motion to approve by Legislator Romaine, seconded by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Abstention? No? Motion carries.

Approved (VOTE: 4•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).

LEG. ROMAINE:

I believe I'm listed as a cosponsor, but if I'm not I do wish to be. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

2068•06 • Amending the 2006 Adopted Operating Budget to accept and appropriate 100% additional State Aid from the New York state Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to various contract agencies for Medically Supervised Outpatient Services in Suffolk County (County Executive). Motion to approve and put it on the Consent Calendar, second by Legislator Eddington. All in favor? Abstention? No? Motion is approved (VOTE: 4•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).

Memorializing Resolutions

M066•2006 • Memorializing Resolution in support of the "Lyme and Tick•Borne Disease Prevention, Education and Research Act of 2005 (Romaine). Legislator Romaine, what's your pleasure?

LEG. ROMAINE:

Motion to approve, please.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Motion •• seconded by myself. All in favor? Abstention? No?

Motion is approved (VOTE: 4•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).

M068•2006 • Memorializing Resolution in support of Counterfeit Drug Enforcement Act of 2005 (Stern). Legislator Stern?

LEG. STERN:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

I'll second the motion. All in favor? Abstention? No?

Motion carried (VOTE: 4•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).

We are now over with the budget, we are into our presentation. I would like to call Mr. Proios to the table. Let me do a little preface as to why Mr. Proios is here. I'm sure some of you have read in the paper in terms of the application that the Water Authority have made in terms of drilling into the Lloyd Aquifer to ••

LEG. ROMAINE:

I have a question.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

You have a question for Mister ••

LEG. ROMAINE:

Graham.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Mr. Graham. Oh, okay. Mr. Proios, just •• you can sit right there, Mr. Proios. Mr. Graham, Dr.

Graham •• I hope it's not going to be a long discussion.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Very short.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Very short.

CHIEF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:

Yes, this is very short. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

All right, somebody bring me the encyclopedia because I'm going to need it.

CHIEF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:

Thank you very much. I'm Dr. Graham, obviously, I'm Chief Deputy.

I'd like to say a few •• just a few words in tribute to Dr. Harper.

As you know, he's moving on at the end of this month and I just want to say a few words, it will be only a few minutes.

It's been an honor and privilege working with Dr. Harper over the last few years. It has been a joy to work with him on a personal and professional level. He is an exceptional leader, a man with great integrity, outstanding intellect, competence, compassion, diplomatic skills, unsurpassed in developing community relationships and possesses a true appreciation for what is clinically important. He has accomplished his primary objective; that is to do what is best for the people of Suffolk.

His exceptional efforts on behalf of all of our people, especially the poor, the disadvantaged, minorities, the frail, elderly and young, will always be remembered. He has worked tirelessly in developing strong community and religious affiliations in strengthening our relationship with the Academic Medical Center at Stonybrook. In my opinion, much of his work has surpassed previous efforts over the past 20 years. You can be reassured that we will continue his vision and direction for health services in the future.

We understand his decision to move on with greater challenges and wish him and his family the best in all their future endeavors. And we hope our paths cross again. On behalf of all of us, we sincerely thank him for his many contributions to the people of Suffolk County. His presence in our community is greatly appreciated, he made a difference in the lives of many. Thank you, Dr. Harper.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much, Dr. Graham. I intend to make a short speech on Tuesday when we meet in Riverhead about Dr. Harper. But thank you very much for your kind words. But in the meantime, stay in the hot seat, Mr. Romaine is after you.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Actually, I'm not after you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Oh, okay.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I want to commend the Health Department. As you are aware, there's a County contract for administering Learn to be Tobacco•Free, which is a comprehensive school•based health program, which is part of the school curriculum throughout Suffolk County, and that contract expires on December 31st and is nonrenewable. The Health Department has prepared an RFP for this program to continue into the future. However, and this is my concern and let me state it, it has recently come to my attention •• and this is the letter, by the way, I'm sending to Steve Levy. It has recently come to my attention that the directed •• the Health Department has been directed by the County Exec's Office to place an indefinite hold on the RFP. My letter to the County Executive said, "Why?" And if you can get some information on this, I certainly would appreciate it.

Your department, obviously, saw the need to continue this Learn to be Tobacco•Free. You drafted an RFP and I'm told that you submitted it and an indefinite hold has been put on it. And there may be legal reasons, there may be other reasons for it, but I'm just curious, because I thought that program served a good purpose of trying to convince kids not to smoke tobacco.

MR. BROWN:

If I may, Mr. Chair, from the County Attorney's Office.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

I knew when you walked in, I said, "We've got some legal issues to go to."

MR. BROWN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Go ahead, sir.

MR. BROWN:

For the record, Dennis Brown. I don't intend to answer on behalf of the Doctor, Mr. Romaine. I just wanted to let you know that the expiration of the contract has been brought to the attention of our bureau this week and we're looking into the status of it this week.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I know the contract expires. I'll just put it on the record. The Health Department prepared an RFP so a new contract could be issued, but apparently, for some reason, there was an indefinite hold put on it at the County Exec's level, and I'm just trying to find out, you know, why. Is there a problem legally, is there other problems with this? That's all I'm trying to discover.

MR. BROWN:

Yeah. I •• the Law Department can't speak to it right now only because it was just brought to my attention yesterday as well.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Well, perhaps •• did Mr. Zwirn leave? I guess he did.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

He left; he knew you were going to ask questions, so he left.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Okay. You know what? When he wants to go at me, he's here.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Okay.

LEG. ROMAINE:

When I have a question for him, he disappears. He's very good.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much, Dr. Graham. Thank you very much, Mr. Brown. Could you go back to my •• you're done. To go back to my original thing ••

MR. PERILLIE:

He's going to speak on that.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Who? Who?

MR. PERILLIE:

Speak on ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

On what bill?

MR. PERILLIE:

On this RFP issue.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

No, no, no, don't entertain it.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN:

All right.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Because all we're going to do is wind up Romaine and we'll be here for the next two hours.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN:

That's fine.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Okay.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN:

I'll speak to him privately.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

He's going to send it •• he's going to send a letter to your boss, let the boss answer him.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN:

That's fine. I'll speak to him privately.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

And they have other people here that can •• Mr. Proios, I have asked him to come in to explain to us what exactly has been in the paper, and also how and why we do certain things at the Water Authority.

Mr. Proios, you've got the floor.

MR. PROIOS:

Thank you, Chairman Mystal. For those of you who don't know me, I have been your Chief Environmental Analyst for the past 15 years here in the County, most of that time as the Assistant County Executive for Environmental Affairs. I've also been appointed by this body to the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District for the past eight years and as a member of the Water Authority. But prior to that, I was the Executive Director of the New York State Legislative Commission on the Water Resource Needs of Long Island, a position I held for ten years. And it was during that time that I was involved in the actual writing of this legislation regarding the Lloyd Aquifer moratorium, so I'm one of the few people still alive that actually has some knowledge of what the Legislative intent was when we passed that particular piece of legislation. And what I want to do is just take two minutes to go through the basic geology of the Island to explain why •• the information I have for you ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Take the microphone with you, it will reach. The microphone, if you take it, it will reach.

MR. PROIOS:

We have Long Island at the widest point, about 20 miles. If you were to take a knife and cut it in half, these are the different geological formations you would find underneath, sand, gravel and clay that we've given different names to, because of their difference in porosity, how fast water goes through it. So this is the actual geology, the sand and the bedrock underneath it. The top layer is the glacier, where we used to get most of our water from and most private wells still come from, the Magothy, which is where most of the public water, at least in Suffolk County, comes from, then there's a confining layer of clay called the Raritan clay, and then there's the Lloyd Aquifer, which is the deepest and oldest water. This is the geology.

And the term "hydrogeology" is when you throw water, hydro, on top of it, what happens to water when it falls down into these geological formations. So, depending on where it falls, if it falls in the middle of the Island, it goes through the two layers, very slowly through the clay, and eventually gets into the Lloyd Aquifer, and sometimes that process will take decades and decades, and the water down here is actually centuries old. And it has a choice of doing one thing when it hits bedrock, it's either got to go north or it's got to go south, it can't go through the bedrock. So we have Lloyd Aquifer water going into Long Island Sound, we have Lloyd Aquifer water going into the Atlantic Ocean.

There's a lot of other different terms, but for the purpose of what this whole issue is about, Nassau and Suffolk is dramatically different in terms of where that salt water meets fresh water. It's what we call the salt water/fresh water interface. If you were to go out to Davis Park, about a half a mile out into the ocean and drill a well down, you would eventually go straight down and you'd hit Lloyd Aquifer water there. As you start heading west into Nassau County, that salt water/fresh

water interface is shrinking closer and closer into where you get to Long Beach and Lido Beach. It's right at the coastal line. The reason being, they have so many wells in Nassau County that are drawing water out, it's shrinking the size of the fresh water.

We have roughly the same population as Nassau County. We have 1.4, they have 1.3 million, but we have twice the land mass, so we have twice the volume of water. So we aren't having problems in terms of a shrinking water supply. In terms of the North Shore, we have roughly 16 million gallons every day that are flowing through the Lloyd that are being lost into Long Island Sound. So whether we take it or don't take it, it's moving into the salt water anyway.

So I prevent •• I've provided you with some information, which I'll go through in a second. On your left side is just another picture trying to describe again what I just went through there, just to jog your memory. And behind that is a bar chart, which shows again the differences between the pumpings of the two counties. If you look on the left side, you look at Nassau County, where a total amount of 14 million gallons per day of Lloyd water. Of that, almost 12 million is being pumped out, because they have over 41 wells that are in the Lloyd. And you look at ours, again, because we have a larger land mass, we have 16 million gallons per day, and of that, you can see the red on the bottom, we have existing five wells. I think a couple, two or three of them are actually ones up at Northport that the State operates, and the other •• the only other two are the Water Authority's, and we proposed •• the Water Authority is proposing one well. So that would account, if it was approved, 4% of the total volume of what's in there. So you can see the drastic difference.

Water is normally flow in, again, north or south. What's happened, though, recently with our groundwater model showing us that with all the pumping that Nassau is doing is that they're starting to change the flow patterns a little bit in the Huntington area, because so much is coming out that there's starting to look like there's a movement from east now to west, which has never happened before. So, if they continue to pump more water in the Nassau area, eventually Suffolk's water will be starting to make a turn going westward. So that's one fear or concern we have, which we're hoping that DEC will start to monitor more closely, or at least let us use our model to help them monitor that.

On the right-hand side, I've given you a copy of an excerpt from the report that our Commission did. Every year we had an annual report to the Legislature. They usually were a telephone-size book like this, and this was the 1985 report. And in that is when we did an article about the Lloyd Aquifer. So I gave you the excerpt of that chapter. If you were to read it later on, you'll see that Suffolk County is hardly ever named in there. The reason we passed this law was not to address a problem in Suffolk County, but it was to address a problem in Nassau County.

And there were three issues in Nassau County. One was the Garden City Water Supply was proposing to put a well in the Lloyd, which they were going to use for air conditioning purposes, and then bump the water out into the ocean, which made no sense to anyone, and they were sued and that got stopped.

The second was an application by another water company that had contamination in the Magothy level, and they wanted to go deeper, and the DEC allowed them to go deeper. What they forgot to tell them was to move their well into a different location. And what happened was the contaminant followed the well casing through the Raritan clay and got down into the Lloyd. And so, for the first time, we actually had contamination in the Lloyd Aquifer, and that just seemed to be just poor management.

And then the third issue was Lido Beach, Long Beach were telling people, telling the DEC that they were starting to pick up chlorides in their water supply, not enough for people to taste, but enough that they saw that the levels were going up, so they knew that something was happening in the coastline. So because of that, the New York State Legislative Commission drafted this legislation, and we said we need better management of the Lloyd, and we wanted to put a moratorium on it.

And never in my wildest dreams, I've been in government for 34 years, I've never expected that it would take a government entity 20 years to develop rules and regulations. The idea was that we would have a moratorium for one, maybe two years, have the rules and regs put in place, and then

there would be a process for water companies to apply, and DEC would either say yes or no. In the interim, there have been many studies done. The first one was right after we passed the law. The USGS came up with a report in 1985. They came up with another one in 1987 loaded with maps about where the Lloyd actually was, and you could see the difference between Nassau and Suffolk. There's many of these. I just brought a few of them. This is one in 1995. And all of these together were used in our comprehensive groundwater model that this Legislature has been paying for for I think probably close to eight years, probably one of the most sophisticated models in the country to look at where groundwater is flowing and how contaminants are affecting it. That went into preparing this application that went before DEC in order to put this one well in.

The reason there is some information or questions about five wells is that one of the questions raised in the application was try to do a worst case scenario and try to see how additional wells might effect that salt water/fresh water interface. So they asked the Water Authority to run the model putting five wells in to see if it would affect that 14 or 18 million gallons that's flowing out into Long Island Sound. And it basically made just a small ripple of a change, even with five wells.

So the conclusion they came to, that installing one well would have virtually no impact, even if they would put five wells, which they have no intention of doing, would still not affect that fresh water that's flowing out into Long Island Sound today.

So the issue about whether there's a precedence or not, I put in your pamphlet also some of the answers and •• the questions and answers that the Water Authority has been receiving in a form of fact sheet. Some of these were in the letters you received from the Nassau County Legislators that wrote to you. This doesn't set a precedent, because every one of these applications still has to go through DEC, still has to go through an administrative hearing, and the Judge makes a decision on the merits of the case in front of you, so there is no precedent. If there was a precedent, we wouldn't be going through this, because the 41 wells that are already in Nassau County would have opened the door for everybody else and they haven't. So this is the first time since then that the Suffolk County Water Authority in 20 years is putting in an application.

And the problem in the area is just high nitrates. It's not a carcinogen, it's just something that affects babies when they're up to six months of age, Blue Baby Syndrome. And what they want to do is blend the water with the clean Lloyd Aquifer water with the contaminated water, so it could meet the drinking water levels. The other alternatives were pump water from another distance. In the 1986 report that the County had done, the master plan for water showed that if you pump water more than three miles from its source, it gets extremely expensive, especially that area in Huntington, because you're going to be going uphill. And you need electricity to pump water and that's our biggest expense at the Water Authority now is just pumping water out of the ground. That's our biggest operating expense, is electricity.

And the other option would be to treat it. And we built our first denitrification plant ever on the Long Island and the first one in the entire State of New York. It's up in Northport. It's been operating only less than a year, so we don't really have that much experience in operating a reverse osmosis plant on this scale. And if you know anything about reverse osmosis, it's very complicated. The amount of water you put in takes a long time before it's cleansed to come out, so you lose a tremendous volume. So, if you put 100% in, you're lucky if you're going to get 60% out, so you lose a certain capacity of your well. And we want some experience in operating before we actually decide to build another plant like this, and so it would be foolish to build two of them before we even have five years worth of operating experience. The first one, because we called it a pilot, we used the entire rate base of all of the Suffolk County ratepayers to pay for it. If we were to build a second one, really, the cost would have to be borne by the people living up in the Huntington area.

So that's the reason why we opted, or the Water Authority opted go with this Lloyd Aquifer. It's more cost effective. It doesn't provide any type of harm to the environment. It doesn't cause any inconvenience to anybody in Nassau County or to Suffolk County. And today is the third day that they're going through their administrative hearing at DEC right now on this issue, and, hopefully, the Administrative Judge will give a decision sometime in the near future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you. I'm sure we have some questions for you. I'll start the questioning. From the way I'm looking at it from my point of view, Nassau County is objecting to Suffolk County Water Authority to •• objecting to your plan to drill into the Lloyd Aquifer while they have been doing it with 41 wells for many a year, right? Is that •• did I get •• did I catch the substance of the whole thing?

MR. PROIOS:

Yes. In all honesty, I mean, some of those wells were put in before the moratorium, but they have put other wells in since the moratorium.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Since the moratorium. So, in other words, they're drawing on our water, and when you say, "I would like to draw," they say, "Oh, you can't do that, because we need it." Yeah, okay, tough.

Number two thing, the •• and also, the other group of people who are objecting, some people are saying that, you know, we should not tap into the Lloyd Aquifer, because it's a last resort, you know, source of water and that we should leave it alone. But, in the meantime, when they're saying that, they're not saying that Nassau County to stop drawing from it, right?

MR. PROIOS:

Right.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Okay. That's point number two. Point number three ••

MR. PROIOS:

I mean, you're saving it for a rainy day. When is the rainy day? This is our rainy day right now.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Yeah, what do you do •• yeah, okay.

MR. PROIOS:

We have a contamination up there, we need it. If you're saving it and can never have access to it, what's its value?

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Point number three, you say 14 million gallons of water is flowing into the Long Island Sound every day that •• you know, that we're losing, it's flowing out there. So you're planning •• are you planning on getting 14 million gallons a day? No.

MR. PROIOS:

No.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

How many gallons do you think you're going to get out a day?

MR. PROIOS:

Less. I think they're proposing like 130 gallons per minute, and it's not going to be operating 24 hours a day. We usually have them on maybe eight hours a day, then off, then on.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Okay. So that's •• you know, that's not going to do anything to the flow.

MR. PROIOS:

No. The wells are designed roughly around a million gallons a day, but we hardly ever operate. That's the maximum capacity. And all of our well fields are on certain timers and we usually, like I said ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

So, if you would do the maximum, it would be a million gallons a day, and we're losing 14 million a day going into the Sound. Okay. Next question that I have for you, and this is, you know, part of my bailiwick, and you said to me when you came to my office that water flows from north to south, it doesn't go east•west.

MR. PROIOS:

Most of the time.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Most of the time it doesn't go east•west. This is my pertinent question. This is, you know •• and there's nobody here, so I'm not speaking for the audience or the TV, you know, just us chickens here. We have been buying a whole lot of land out east under the guise that we're buying that land because we are preserving water or water supply. Now, if I buy a piece of land somewhere in Southampton or in Brookhaven, wherever, and they're saying to me, "I'm preserving the money," since water does not go east to west, what does that do for me who lives in Amityville or if I live in Huntington, or •• can I get water from there to come to Amityville?

MR. PROIOS:

Not unless you spend a fortune on building a transmission line that runs from east to west and then pumping it west. We have ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

So all that •• all that money I'm spending buying land, supposedly because I'm trying to preserve water, that's doing diddly for me Amityville, is it?

MR. PROIOS:

No. You are preserving a large chunk of the largest volume of untapped water in the area.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Of water. But not •• but not people that live the west end part.

MR. PROIOS:

But right now, your water's coming from where you live. We have 550 wells throughout the County and you get your water, roughly, probably within a couple of miles of where you live. So it's important for you to protect the area around those well fields. If you forget about protecting those waters and they become contaminated, then we have to slap carbon filters on them and the price ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

So last year I bought a piece of land for 16 million dollars in Montauk under the guise that it was protecting the aquifer. Somebody pulled the wool over my eyes?

MR. PROIOS:

No. In that area, definitely is affecting that. Montauk has ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Yeah, but not for me.

MR. PROIOS:

Well, not in the western part. But Montauk has a single ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

No. In other words, you know, I was the dummy.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

No. You represent Suffolk.

MR. PROIOS:

No.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

You're doing the right thing for Suffolk.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

No. No, I'm talking about my district. Okay? I'm talking about my district. I'm talking about Western Suffolk. When I spend 16 million dollars, when somebody tells me, "Oh, we are protecting the water supply in Amityville when you buy," in other words, I'm being a joke. You know, like you can't fix stupid, so I'm being stupid.

MR. PROIOS:

No, I don't think they meant to say that you were protecting your water supply in the Amityville area, but definitely, in the Montauk peninsula has a single lens ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

If I have a •• if I have a water crisis in Amityville, would I be able to get water from Montauk?

MR. PROIOS:

No.

LEG. ROMAINE:

You're driving me nuts.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

I know you're driving me nuts •• that's my time to drive you nuts.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

We'll send you a bottle of water.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Anyway, I'm going to get off of that, you know, and I'm going to let somebody else ask a question, because that's ••

LEG. STERN:

Yes. Thank you.

LEG. ROMAINE:

You're hurting my feelings there.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

That's because there was more land. I'm not buying anymore.

LEG. STERN:

George, hello.

MR. PROIOS:

Hi.

LEG. STERN:

Coming out of this issue, some of the arguments are, well, we should take all other efforts that are at all possible before we tap into the Lloyd, and, of course, other efforts, and bring up a discussion

about technology and, of course, corresponding cost. There's the plant that's operational right now in Northport. You had said that it's a newer plant, so it's going to take some time before we have a full understanding as to •• as to how, you know, it works for us. Do you have any idea as to what kind of a time period you would be looking at in order to be able to say, you know, whether or not it meets expectations?

MR. PROIOS:

I'd really have to look at the engineers who are operating it, I mean, but nobody even, like I said, in the rest of the State has any experience with it. So we're, in a sense, on the cutting edge of this whole technology, because no one has put a system this size in place for municipal water. We're the second largest groundwater purveyor in the country. And so we're looking at developing some sort of a track record to see when we have problems, when we don't have problems, how quickly it is to deal with them. If there's another contaminant that's brought into the issue, how it affects it or doesn't affect it. So I would think you'd need several years of operating experience before you can, you know, draw upon that and say we want to spend, you know, several million dollars now on building another facility. Now, the other problem is that another facility couldn't even be located at the site where we're proposing where the contaminated well is. There just isn't enough physical room there in order to put it there.

LEG. STERN:

And I think, from what you had said before, it would take a plant that would be exponentially larger than the one that's operating now; isn't that true? Would it be just replicating the same type of facility that's there now, or would it have to be much larger with much greater capacity?

MR. PROIOS:

It would be as large as the one in North •• the one in Northport is fairly large. It has many, many cylinders with reverse osmosis things where water goes in and it's turned on the carousel. If you had an opportunity, you really should go out and visit it, because it is unique. It's the first time

I've ever seen them, because there isn't anyone around here to look at •• like it. And it would be very large in terms of sitting on that site. It would take up more of the entire well field. Right now, a well field is made up of one, two or three wells, then a brick house that has your lyme and your chlorine treatment. So there's usually three or four structures on the site, which we already have at the existing site. If you were proposing to a denitrification, that would be larger than any of the other facilities on that site. It would dwarf them and it would •• basically, you'd have to stop using your treatment for chlorine and lyme in order to make room for it, which you couldn't do legally. You have to add chlorine into the water supply. So there just physically isn't a way to put something in that size there.

LEG. STERN:

Right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Legislator Eddington.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Thank you. So I gather you're saying that there's restrictions on drilling in the Lloyd Aquifer; is that correct?

MR. PROIOS:

There was a moratorium, and you can go and apply, as they're currently doing, for a one•time waiver of that moratorium for a particular site.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

And is the quality of the water at •• in the different aquifers better? The further you go down, the clearer or the better, sparkling, whatever?

MR. PROIOS:

In terms of human contamination, generally, the lower you went •• that's what happened in Nassau. The glacier got contaminated. They dug deeper into the Magothy, but they weren't controlling the discharges from industries. Then the Magothy got contaminated, and so they went deeper into the Lloyd. That's the first reason they went to the Lloyd, was not because they had salt, because the water was contaminated. Then they went to sewers and almost 90% of Nassau is sewered. Now the problem there is that water's not going down, so the size of the aquifer is shrinking, but they have less contamination. And they have found in many areas where the Glacial had been contaminated has now recovered, and so water companies, instead of going deeper, are now pulling the wells up in the 100, 150, 200 level, rather than at the 800 foot level.

In our case, in the Water Authority, we're almost mixed. About 50% of our wells are in the Glacial, 50% in the Magothy, because we have a fairly good program between Article 6, Article 7, Article 12. We control a lot of our industrial discharges a lot better than Nassau County was doing it, so we have a much higher quality of water that has been recharged over the years.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

And you're saying it's very expensive to •• for the drilling down that far.

MR. PROIOS:

To go further •• every time you go deeper, it's, obviously, costing you a lot more money.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Because I'm wondering, if we're losing 14 million gallons of water a day from that aquifer, I mean, why don't we drill and bottle it?

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

That's what he wants to do, but they won't let him.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

You know? I mean, we could call it "Steve Levy's Bottled Water" and make a fortune for the County. I mean ••

LEG. ROMAINE:

Ed Romaine Water.

MR. PROIOS:

Well, they do have a bottling plant. The Water Authority does do that.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Say that again.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Put his face on the bottle.

MR. PROIOS:

The Water Authority does bottle water, right. We use it for ••

LEG. ROMAINE:

With the slogan, "What, Me Worry?"

MR. PROIOS:

Like when we had the emergency at Fire Island recently, we provided the bottled for them. So we used, actually, an area near the Pine Barrens.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

So, actually, that was Suffolk County water that we were giving out.

MR. PROIOS:

Yeah. We have ••

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Oh, I thought it was like Poland Springs or something.

MR. PROIOS:

No. We have emergency water standing by that we can deliver to people every time there is a problem, an emergency.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

I'm glad somebody thought of it. Great. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much, George. And thank you for coming and putting up with us.

MR. PROIOS:

Very quickly, I did give you one other thing, because this is coming up. I put this announcement that next week, BCERF, this is a Breast Cancer Environmental Research Forum, is going to be down here.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

This one?

MR. PROIOS:

Yes. If just I might suggest that maybe at a future time, you might want to invite this group to come down, because I know that the breast cancer issue up in the Mount Sinai area was very prevalent recently when the Health Department, State Health Department's final report came out. And this group has been around for almost ten years looking at whatever environmental risks may be associated with breast cancer. So I thought you might find it interesting ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Invite them maybe some day.

MR. PROIOS:

•• to talk to them and find out what their findings are. But they're coming down at this place at Planting Fields, Oyster Bay, on the 28th to discuss some of the recent findings, and if you're able to attend, I would urge you to.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much, Mr. Proios.

MR. PROIOS:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Next up on deck is Lisa Jamison from the Family Service League, and quickly followed by SAJES. The hour is late. Good afternoon. How are you?

MS. JAMISON:

Good afternoon. My name is Lisa Jamison, I'm the Division Director for Family Services at Family Service League and this is Trish Weiner, our Program Coordinator for our AFY After Care Program.

I'm here today to request the Legislature's help to provide additional funding for Family Service League's Alternatives for Youth After Care Program. This program is funded through the Suffolk County Youth Bureau and is part of the overall AFI Program in the County which is projected to reach approximately 720 children by the end of its first year of operation this December. Alternatives For Youth was created last year by the County to obviate the necessity for the opening of PINS Diversion or PINS cases and eliminate the needs for PINS youth to be placed in a residential setting. Our targeted population is children who are at risk of PINS referred by their family, many of whom have serious emotional and behavioral problems. Our current contract provides for 4.5 full•time equivalent workers. However, in order to better meat the needs of the population, we are here, of course, to request an additional \$160,000 which would allow us to increase our staffing and the number of youth served and reduce the waiting list.

The Alternative For Youth Program is currently divided into two phases. EAC, Education and Assistance Corporation operates Phase I where youth remain for one month before transitioned to Family Service League for Phase II, After Care. Statistically, we have found that approximately 50% of the youth from Phase I go into Phase II. On average, youngsters remained in Phase II for an average of five to six months. They, however, typically have truancy problems in school, severe conduct•related problems at home and in school coupled with emotional difficulties. The combination of both these phases, the first phase with EAC and second with Family Service League, has indeed been successful with approximately 250 being seen in our After Care Program since October of 2005, only six youth have had PINS petitions filed. So therefore, we've averted placement for 244 youth, saving Suffolk County taxpayers millions of dollars.

Our program is both family-centered and strength-based. Family Service League's case managers meet weekly with children and their families and continue to wrap family support services around them to ensure that the presenting issues are resolved and placement averted. AFY has provided a valuable opportunity to enhance Suffolk County's youth with at-risk youth. However, we must do more. If we look at the first year of operation as a demonstration project, then we must look at what we can do better in year two.

Our initiative is to create a seamless transition and perhaps it's the most critical reason that additional funding is needed. Waiting lists pose risk for these families and reduce the momentum for the positive changes that have already been made during the Phase I of the program. We typically find that families •• when families go on a waiting list, many of them ultimately drop out of the program and we lose them. Currently we have approximately 30 youth on the waiting list, and this number is subject to increase with additional referrals to the program. Typically, the average monthly waiting list has been 50. With an additional \$160,000, we will dramatically reduce the wait, increasing the number of youth served and avert court involvement. We respectfully request the help of the Suffolk County Legislature to increase the funding for our Alternatives For Youth After Care Program in the 2007 Operating Budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you. For those of you guys who are here, this program is a very, very valuable program. And I don't know what the County Executive intends to do about giving them the increase. I would suggest to them that if they can, if they can, to come to Riverhead on Tuesday and make, you know, a three minute statement to the full Legislature, because it's a valuable program and I think all Legislators need to hear it, and hopefully that you will get some kind of money, you know, from us or from the County Executive. Legislator Romaine?

LEG. ROMAINE:

Very quickly, Mr. Chairman. The County Executive, as I understand it, is releasing his budget, it's not out yet although he's had a press conference on it before we've had an opportunity to read it.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Yeah, today, tomorrow.

LEG. ROMAIN:

Hopefully he'll be releasing it tomorrow. Maybe you can get a copy of that and see what funding, if any, and I mean if any, he's included in his budget. The one thing that I would recommend you to, the Executive proposes and the Legislature disposes. So with that in mind, the Legislature creates a working committee, I don't know who the members are but I know three ••

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Neither do I.

LEG. ROMAIN:

I know three of the members; it will probably be the Presiding Officer, the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader and there'll be three other members, two from the majority and probably one from the minority that is appointed, and they will be meeting to discuss what will be included in the Omnibus Resolution. And I would seek out those three people, Majority Leader, Minority •• that's Mr. Cooper, Minority Leader,

Mr. Losquadro, Presiding Officer who is Mr. Lindsay, seek them out.

If you are under funded or not funded in the Executive's budget, you'll have an opportunity to

have the Legislature try to include you in the omnibus which is the best, because that usually proves to be veto•proof if it's in there.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you. Legislator Eddington? No. Thank you very much.

MS. JAMISON:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

SAJES, finally. You've been waiting patiently, I'm very, very happy. I do apologize for the length of our meeting, but we had a very long session earlier this morning and we had to get something to eat.

Some of us get cranky without food.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

I'll just tell you, it's an educational experience to just sit here and really listen to what you have presented every day and it's really an honor to be here to listen to that and to meet with you, so thank you.

MR. JERDAN:

Good afternoon, members of the committee. My name is Jack Jerdan and obviously this is the

Executive Director of SAJES, Deb Friedman, and we're delighted to be here and thanks for having us.

You all work really hard, my compliments, really. The range of issues and the time and energy you spend on the issues is commendable and, you know, I mean that sincerely. I will be brief because obviously you've been here all day. Two things we want to kind of get across, and one is our Teen: Leadership Initiative, our program to engage youth across Suffolk County; and the other is to talk to you a little bit about SAJES and how we are qualified to implement a teen leadership initiative across Suffolk County.

In the area of being brief, let me just highlight for you the key components of what we call our Teen Program Initiative. And what we seek to do is to organize teens and young adults, specifically targeting disenfranchised youth who have little or no interest, knowledge or understanding about civic engagement, voting and engage them about the importance of entering the electoral system; to help these young people understand why and how their vote counts; connect young people with the political process and with the political leaders; convene a cross•section of youth in the community who will be role models for their peers and engage other youth; immerse these young people in meaningful, cross•cultural dialogue, connecting them with one another, developing positive social networks; invest in young leaders at the local level, introduce them to the local political process.

Some of the ways we propose to do this through SAJES Teen Leadership Initiative; networking, partnering with local community•based organizations; interacting with local town, County, State, Federal elected officials and their staff; linking, matching up, shadowing local, governmental and civic leaders and their staffers with young people who are participating in the project; convening an educational workshop on civic engagement; and last but not least of our key components, facilitate one or more communal events in public space, coffee house, community centers, etcetera.

And I want to say that, you know, right off the bat Legislator Stern is a supporter of our project, and I want to thank him. And I know he had to move along to another appointment, but I want to thank him publicly on behalf of SAJES for allowing us to introduce the teen project to him, him looking over with this capable and qualified staff, Deborah over there, and coming up with the support to be the first County Legislator to stand behind us on this initiative.

And now I'd like to have Deb say a few words about how SAJES and their experience in convening both the prejudice reduction conference, and also our work with Partners United to Stop Hatred in how we are experiencing collaborating and identifying young people, and really through a multi•cultural coalition, bringing young people together to civically engage and better themselves and our communities. Thank you.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

There's not much I can say to follow Jack.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Yes you can. I'm sure you will.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

Yeah, okay, so thank you. Just •• I thought I'd give you just a minute's worth on SAJES itself. I also want to tell you that we have been supported through one of our programs by the Suffolk County Legislature and the County budget for the past few years, and thank you very much for that support.

But SAJES is an educational agency, we're located in Commack serving all of Suffolk County. Our original reason to be was really to create, train and uplift educators, and we continue to do that as a main mission of the agency, both taking novice teachers and helping them in their initial work in the community and training those that want to become teachers. So education is what we are all about. But through our work these years, we have been so committed to teachers, what we have learned and recognized is we have a larger obligation to the community and we have created about 20 years ago a Council for Prejudice Reduction in which I know many of you have heard of our work in the community to bring together all sorts of educators, public and private, to understand how to teach models that would help us learn to respect one another. And from all our work with educators, we now have kind of honed in on the lack of work that needs to be done in teens. And there are some marvelous programs out there, but we really feel that there's a niche for us as well. We've learned that through the work with the educators and we've learned that through the work we do with the community.

So part of what we have done through the years was really look at respect. It kind of frames everything that we do in our agency. Our agency is based on values that one •• all of us should learn to respect and care for one another. And we really need to do some outreach work. We've done some experiments and we have a project that's going on in which we take a bunch of teens, we work with them for a number of months and take them down to Washington to engage in civic action and projects that would help the community. And what we've seen is young people coming back to Suffolk County to set up programs and projects in their high schools and in their local communities have really made a difference. So from that, we wanted to really reach out and begin to expand and reach other teens that we really have not had the opportunity, and that's why we sit before today.

MR. JERDAN:

And basically in closing, I also want to say that we've got the support now of Legislator D'Amaro as well as Legislator Cooper. In addition, we've picked up the support of Assemblyman Raia and Assemblyman Fitzpatrick and we're waiting any hour on support we believe we'll get from

Senator Flanagan as well as Senator Marcellino. So we hope you will consider this as we move along, we'll be working with you and your staff to introduce you more to the specifics of our Teen Leadership Initiative. And we thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

We may have some questions, but let me reenter it in that, you know, one of the unsung, unsaid story of Long Island is that but for the group of people like you and your agencies who work tirelessly with very little money, most of the stuff that are being accomplished in Suffolk County would not be accomplished because government itself cannot do it, it would cost us too much money. We would be too inefficient, we would be too lagged, so I do appreciate, you know, your work.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

And I will give you the same advice that Legislator Romaine gave to the previous group, you know, get to know the people who work in the working committee and make sure that you are funded, make sure that you are in the budget. And if you are not, make sure that you contact the people that are on the Omnibus working •• budget working group. And I wish you well and hopefully you'll be okay because I know how good your program is.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Because my district has been a beneficiary of it.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

We appreciate your words, we really do.

MR. JERDAN:

Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you. Any questions? Mr. Romaine, no? Mr. Eddington?

LEG. ROMAINE:

I would make the same comment to give you every opportunity to make sure that there is money and funding in the program. If it's not in the County Exec's budget, seek out the working committee, try to get it in the Omnibus and then you should be golden.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

Okay. Super.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

Thank you very much.

MS. FRIEDMAN:

Great. Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

With this, if there are no other questions, we'll take a motion to adjourn.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Motion to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN MYSTAL:

All right, second that motion and we are out of here.

*(*The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 PM*)*

*Legislator Elie Mystal, Chairman
Health & Human Services Committee*

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